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Managing the HIV/AIDS risks in subsaharan African couples. The roles of polygamy and co-residency

Annabel Desgrées du Loû, Joseph Larmarange, Hermann Brou

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Managing the HIV/AIDS risks in subsaharan African couples.

The roles of polygamy and co-residency.

Annabel DESGRÉES du LOÛ

Joseph LARMARANGE

Hermann BROU

for the Ditrame Plus 3 study group

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anRS



Institut de recherche
pour le développement



Inserm

Institut national
de la santé et de la recherche médicale



ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DE STATISTIQUE
ET D'ECONOMIE APPLIQUEE



Context

- ✘ In subsaharan Africa, HIV prevention remains largely insufficient
- ✘ The prevention mainly depends on the relationship existing between man and woman within the couple
- ✘ In Africa, conjugal union can take multiple forms
- ✘ We explore here two characteristics of the union :
 - ✘ To have a co-wife or not
 - ✘ To live with the partner or not

Which are related to :

- ✘ The communication on HIV within the couple
- ✘ HIV preventive practices used by the couple



Hypothesis

× Hyp 1 :

when a woman shares her partner with a co-wife

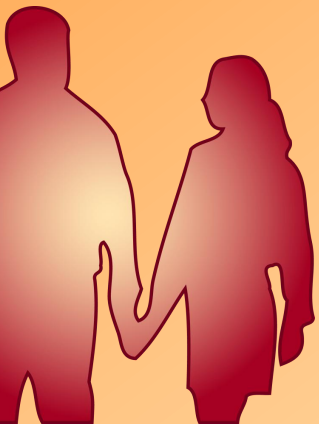
⇔ the male domination is stronger

⇔ there is competition between co-wives

→ Dialogue with the partner is more difficult

→ Women less keen to suggest HIV test or the use of condom to their partner

→ not in favour of the adoption of HIV preventive practices



Hypothesis 2

✘ Hyp 2 :

- ✘ Over the last decades new forms of polygamy have appeared in Africa. These are non official and characterised by non co-residency of the partners.
- ✘ This can be related to a greater autonomy for women

**→ in favour of the
adoption of HIV preventive practices**



Objective : to explore the links

Co-residency
of the partners

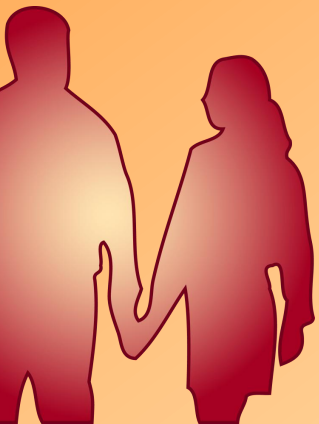
Polygamy
(existence of a co-wife)



Gender
relationships

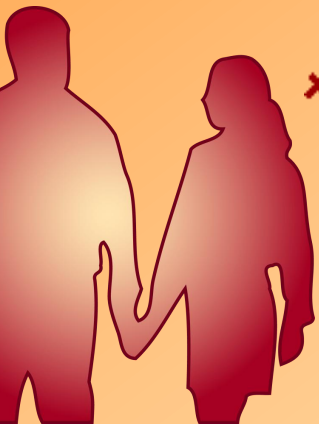


HIV prevention



The present research :

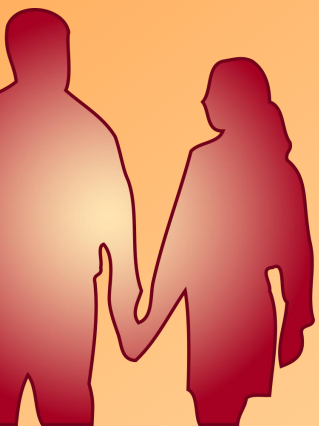
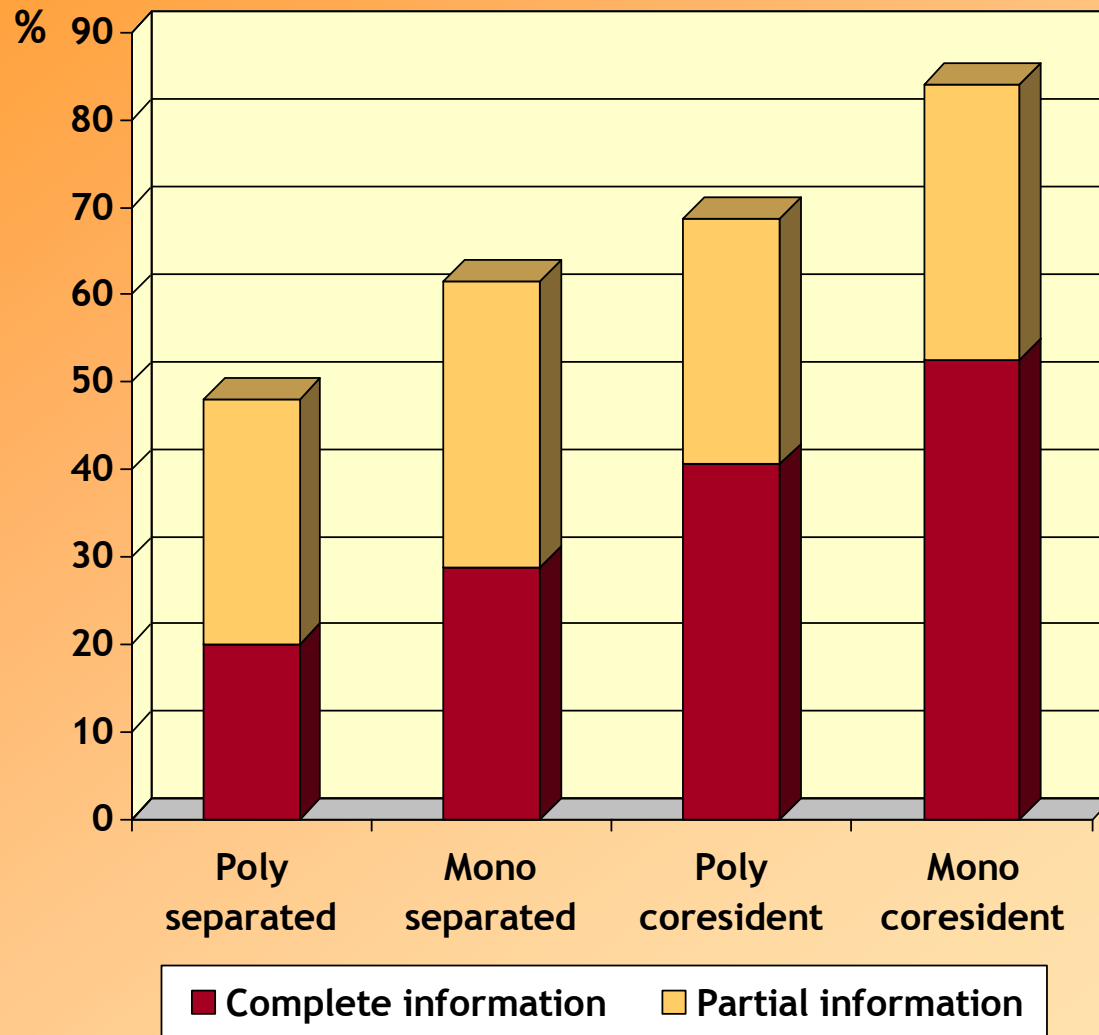
- ✘ Social science part of a Prevention of the Mother-to-Child HIV transmission programme
- ✘ 322 HIV+ women and 353 HIV- women HIV tested during a pregnancy and followed 18 months after delivery
- ✘ Indicators of **risk management** :
 - ✘ Indicators of communication about HIV within the couple
 - ✘ Indicators of HIV preventive practices
- ✘ Variables :
 - ✘ **About couple characteristics** : polygamy, partners co-residency, partners age difference, woman HIV status
 - ✘ **For adjustment** :
 - ✘ for both partners : age, level of education
 - ✘ for women only : religion, remunerated activity, living conditions, age at first sexual intercourse



Communication around STD/HIV within the couple

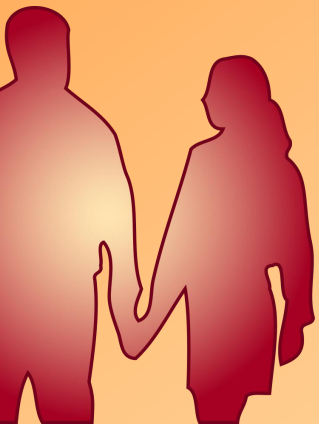
| | BEFORE HIV test | AFTER HIV test | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Dialogue indicator woman/partner | Has discussed STD with partner | Has discussed STD with partner | Has notified partner of her own HIV test | Has suggested for the partner to be HIV tested |
| HIV- women | 65% | 96% | 98% | 91% |
| HIV+ women | 29% | 63% | 51% | 70% |

Communication about STD/HIV between HIV+ women and their partner, after HIV test, by the kind of union

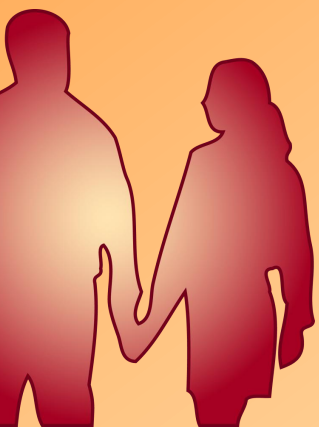
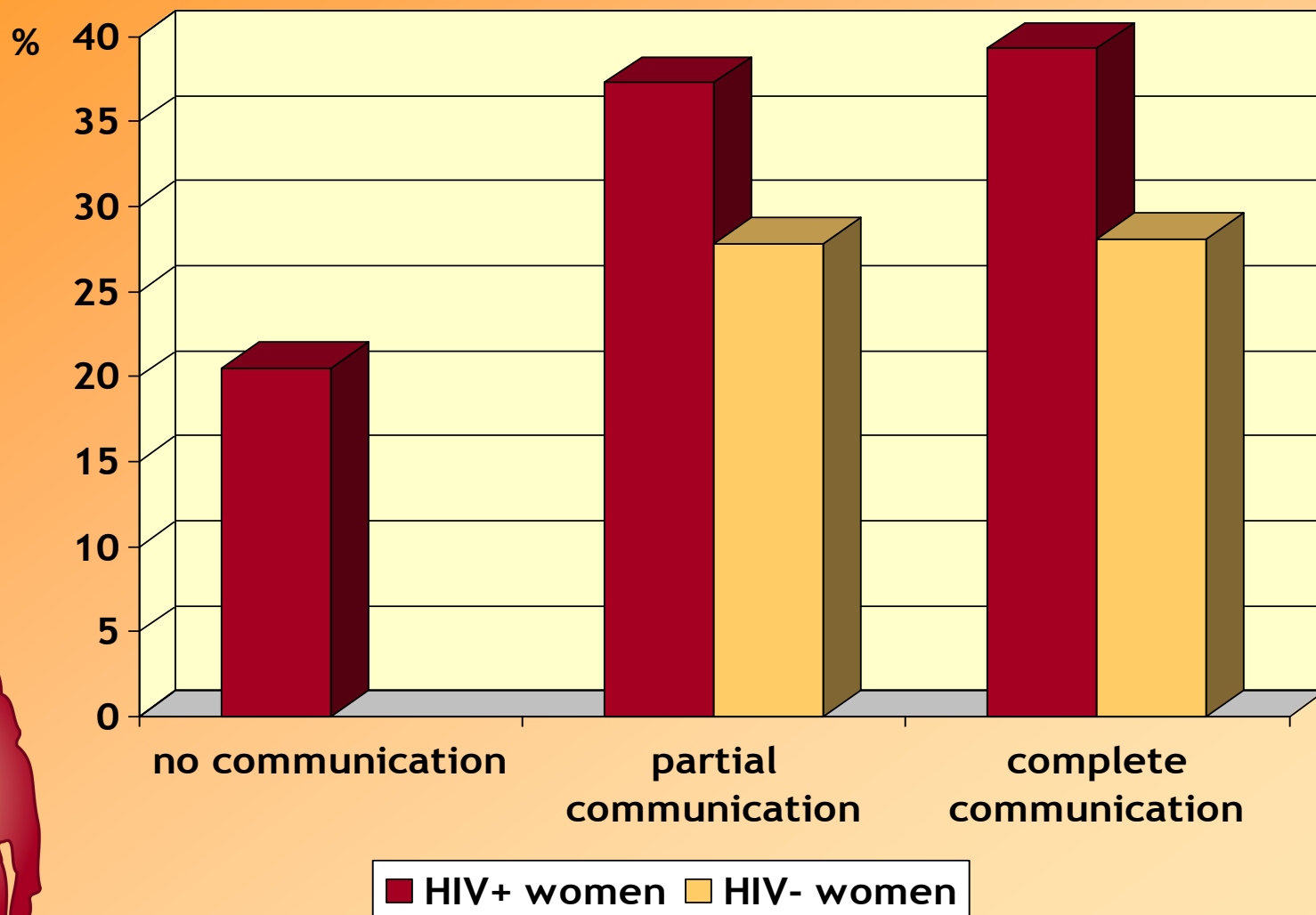


Conclusions on couple communication on STD/HIV

- ✘ After HIV test, nearly all **HIV-** women communicate on HIV and/or STD with their partner
- ✘ After HIV test, 2/3 of **HIV+** women communicate on HIV/STD with their partner
 - ✘ Sometimes without disclosure of their serostatus : strategy of educated women
 - ✘ Co-residency and monogamy are the sociodemographic characteristics strongest related to a complete communication with the partner about HIV



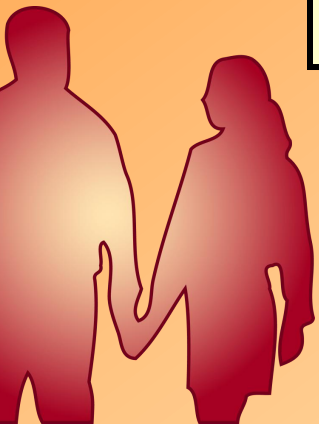
% of systematic condom use at sexual resumption after delivery according to the level of communication on STD/HIV within the couple



Multivariate analysis of the probability of condom use at sexual resumption after delivery

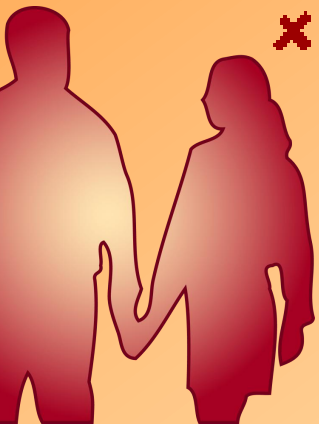
Significant variables after adjustment :

| HIV+ women | HIV- women |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Communication within the couple on STD/ HIV✘ level of education of the partner | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Level of education of the woman |



Conclusions (1)

- ✘ Polygamy and non co-residency related to less communication on STD/HIV within the couple
- ✘ Use of HIV preventive practices depends on
 - ✘ Partner notification of the wife's HIV test
 - ✘ Communication on STD/HIV within the couple
 - ✘ Instruction level of the partner on the risk of HIV infection
- ✘ But no direct link between polygamy and co-residency on HIV preventive practices.



Conclusions (2)

- ✘ It is necessary to take into account **the specificity of the conjugal bond** in order to improve HIV prevention within the couple
- ➔ consider which indicators are to be collected so to catch this specificity, in addition to classical union indicators :
 - ✘ Existence of a co-wife or an «official mistress »
 - ✘ Partners co-residency
 - ✘ Duration of the union
 - ✘ Expectations of each partners regarding this union
 - ✘ Etc.

